Community Health Worker Certification

for Experienced CHWs Application Instructions

(formerly known as the grandparenting process)

September 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

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Maryland Community Health Worker Certification for Experienced CHWs

The Annotated Code of Maryland, Health-General Article, Title 13, Subtitle 37 established the State Community Health Worker (CHW) Advisory Committee to advise the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) on establishing a process to certify CHWs and accredit CHW certification training programs in Maryland. Health-General §13–3705(a)(4)(iii) requires a process through which an individual occupied as a CHW on October 1, 2018 (date the Act went into effect) and who already possesses the knowledge taught in a CHW training program accredited by MDH, may be exempt from the training required. The requirements for experienced CHWs to apply for certification and to be exempt from the training requirements are:

- **Age**
    - An individual seeking CHW certification must be 18 years old or older.

- **Experience**
    - A minimum of 2,000 hours of CHW paid or volunteer experience five years prior to October 1, 2018 or five years prior to the date of the CHW certification application submission.
    - Occupied as a CHW on October 1, 2018.

- **Proficiency in Core Competencies**
    - Proficiency in core competencies must be detailed by the applicant to describe how their paid or volunteer experience demonstrates/demonstrated knowledge and skills and validated by a current or former CHW employer, supervisor, or agency representative. The core competencies include:

        1. Advocacy and community capacity building skills
        2. Effective oral and written communication skills
        3. Cultural competency
        4. Understanding of ethics and confidentiality issues
        5. Knowledge of local resources and system navigation
        6. Care coordination skills
        7. Teaching skills to promote health behavior change
        8. Outreach methods and strategies
        9. Understanding of public health concepts and health literacy

        The **Maryland Community Health Worker Core Competencies** document provides more information on Maryland's nine CHW core competencies.

- **Letters of Validation**
    - A minimum of two letters of validation from a current or former CHW employer, supervisor, or agency representative that recommend the applicant for certification, validate the minimum of 2,000 hours of required experience, and validate proficiency in the core competencies.

Certification for CHWs in Maryland is voluntary and there is no fee for a CHW in Maryland to apply for certification.

CHW Certification Application for Experienced CHWs Deadline

The deadline to submit a CHW certification application for experienced CHWs is March 31, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

An applicant may request an extension in writing by March 31, 2020 to MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov that includes documentation of good cause for an extension. MDH will determine if the extension is reasonable under the circumstances. An extension request may not exceed 60 days.

How to Apply

Applicants are highly encouraged to submit their application through the online application portal. If an applicant is unable to submit an application online, please contact the CHW Certification team for alternate application options at MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov or call 410-767-5971.

Downloadable Forms and Documents Instructions

1. Adobe reader is required to complete the letter of validation downloadable form.
2. Prior to completing the downloadable form, save the form to your computer and close the original view. Open the saved document from your computer location and enter information.

Online Application Portal Instructions

1. Before you begin review the Frequently Asked Questions document, Maryland Community Health Worker Core Competencies document, and Letter of Validation form.

2. Go to the MDH Office of Population Health Improvement (OPHI) CHW Certification webpage and click "Apply Here for CHW Certification".
3. Create an account by clicking the "Register" button on the top right of the homepage.
   a. Enter required information and click "Submit."
   b. A verification email will be sent to the email address entered. Complete the verification instructions contained in that email to effectively establish your account and log in to your account to access the application.
   c. If applicant already has an account, click "Login."

Application Field Descriptions

Application Fields	Notes
First and Last Name	Enter your full first and last name as it appears on the form of age verification documentation. Please do not use nicknames. Note: This name will appear on any certificate that is issued.
Date of Birth	Click in the Date of Birth field (MM/DD/YYYY). When the calendar appears, place your cursor over the year in the calendar and click to enter the year of your birth. Then scroll to your birth month and click on your birth date.
Phone	Enter a valid 10-digit phone number including the area code (000-000-0000). Note: The phone number may be used to contact the applicant if additional information is required.
Email	Enter a valid email address. Note: The email address may be used to contact the applicant if additional information is required, with renewal reminders, and for other pertinent information related to a certification.
Are you 18 years old or older?	Select "Yes" or "No." Note: An individual seeking certification must be 18 years of age or older by the date of their application submission.
Age Verification	Upload any of the following documents to verify your age: ● Municipal identification card ● Driver's license ● Birth certificate ● Military ID ● State ID ● Passport ● Employment authorization card ● Permanent resident card ● Community identification card ● Other Note: Non-U.S. government-issued documents are acceptable forms of age verification. The name on the age verification document needs to match the name on the application. If the age verification document has a different name, then also submit a name change document.

Mailing Address	Enter your mailing address. Note: Mailing address may be used to contact the applicant with renewal reminders or other pertinent information related to a certification. Applicants are not required to be a resident of the state of Maryland to be eligible for CHW certification. Your mailing address may be different than your home address.
Do you have a minimum of 2,000 hours of CHW paid or volunteer experience five years prior to October 1, 2018 or five years prior to the application date?	Select "Yes" or "No." Note: An individual seeking certification through this process must have completed a minimum of 2,000 hours of CHW paid or volunteer experience five years prior to October 1, 2018 or five years prior to the application date.
Were you occupied as a CHW on October 1, 2018?	Select "Yes" or "No." Note: An individual seeking certification through this process must have been occupied as a CHW on October 1, 2018.
CHW Paid or Volunteer Experience History	List your CHW paid or volunteer experience five years prior to October 1, 2018 or five years prior to the application date. The current or most recent experience must be noted first. Click in the date fields to enter start and end dates. When the calendar appears, place your cursor over the year in the calendar and click to enter the year. Then scroll to the month and click on the specific date.
Letters of Validation	Upload a minimum of two letters of validation. The required Letter of Validation form with detailed instructions for both the applicant and current or former CHW supervisor, employer, or agency representative can be downloaded from the CHW Certification webpage. Note: Adobe reader is required to complete the downloadable letter of validation. Note: The Letters of Validation must be signed by a current or former CHW employer, supervisor, or agency representative. If you have questions regarding this requirement, please contact the CHW Certification team for guidance.

Optional Information	The information requested in this section is optional. The applicant is not required to complete this information. The information entered in this section will not be used to determine certification eligibility.
Attestation and Signature	The applicant must provide a signature in agreement with the attestation.

Questions and Technical Support

If you have a question about the application or are having technical difficulty with the online portal, please contact the CHW Certification team at MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov or call 410-767-5971.

Application Translation Services

The application will be available in English and Spanish. If the applicant would like the application translated into another language, please contact MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov or call 410-767-5971.

Incomplete Applications

1. An application is not complete until it has been completed in full and submitted. All fields in the application must be complete with the exception of the optional information section. An applicant will receive notification when an application has been successfully submitted.
2. If the application is incomplete or additional information is needed, the applicant will be notified within 30 calendar days with information that specifies the materials required to submit a complete application.
3. If the applicant does not provide the required documentation within 120 calendar days of notification, the application may be administratively closed or denied.

Application Review Period

Once an application has been successfully submitted through the online application portal, the applicant will receive a confirmation email.

The application will be reviewed by the CHW Certification team and the applicant will be **notified of the application decision no later than 90 days from application submission date**.

MDH may contact an applicant to request additional information, as needed. If the requested information is not provided within 120 calendar days, the application may be administratively closed or denied.

Applicants can contact MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov or call 410-767-5971 if there are questions about the status of an application.